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PRESS RELEASE

January 11, 1989

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FIRST PUBLIC VIEWING OF RECENT COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOEL MEYEROWITZ

January 27 - March 12, 1989

The Cleveland Museum of Art presents the first public exhibition of recent works by pioneer color photographer Joel Meyerowitz in **White Nights in Leningrad: Work in Progress by Joel Meyerowitz**. Made during his visit there last summer, these 8x10 contact prints and 11x14 enlargements show the 18th-century capital city in the light of the "white nights" around the summer solstice in June, when the sun barely sets at that northern latitude. One or two of Meyerowitz's finished 20x24 enlargements will also be among the approximately forty images in the show, on view from January 27 through March 12, 1989.

Meyerowitz arrived in Leningrad on June 28, 1988, and during the next ten days took between eighty and a hundred 8x10 negatives, starting at about 7:30 pm and working until around 2:30 am. In the working prints chosen for this exhibition by Tom Hinson, the Museum's curator of contemporary art, the earliest time of day pictured is about 9 pm; most on view here were taken between 10 pm and midnight. Meyerowitz conveys the luminous atmosphere of summer nights in Leningrad, when 10 pm looks like a very bright 5 or 6 pm here in Cleveland, and midnight like 7 or 8 pm, and where sunset lasts for several hours, casting dramatic long shadows. His pictures record many scenes hauntingly vacant in "daylight"--commercial and business districts, the Hermitage, churches, fortresses and other historic landmarks, canals, parks and plazas. In Neva River (12:15 am), a long view of the city and its famous waterway, there is a solitary swimmer.

For each negative, Meyerowitz observes and precisely logs the exact colors he saw in his subject, the quality of the day and the light, and the highlights in the scene, so that he can accurately reproduce the image in the darkroom. A master of the finest nuances of color in rich, lush pictures made without filters, Meyerowitz uses an old 8x10-inch Deardorff view camera, and makes exposures ranging from one-tenth of a second to ten minutes, to capture breathtaking clarity and detail in his quiet, even static, scenes.

Meyerowitz was born in 1938 in New York; he received his B.A. from Ohio State University in 1959. He has been awarded two Guggenheim Fellowships and grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. His pictures have been published in such books as Cape Light (1978), which served as the catalogue for his solo exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; St. Louis and the Arch (1980), commissioned by The St. Louis Art Museum; and A Summer's Day (1985). Meyerowitz's recent trip was commissioned and funded by the monthly magazine Condé Nast's Traveler, which will include a selection of the Leningrad images in an upcoming issue.

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